

# The DCBR sometimes required to be on fire

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Public Affairs

Sometimes there is a need to start a fire to benefit the environment, prevent a catastrophic wildfire and foster a natural habitat for endangered species. This is the case for maintaining the land at the Dare County Bombing Range.

The 4th Civil Engineer Squadron environmental flight takes their role of environmental stewardship seriously as they begin working with federal and state agencies to prepare for a controlled burn of more than 2,500 acres at the DCBR located near the Outer Banks within the next two weeks.

"This will be the first large-scale burn to remove thick, high brush on five blocks of the range," said Bryan Henderson, conservation and analysis element leader of the base natural resource program. "We can complete the burn without stopping flying operations or causing any damage to homes outside the perimeter of the range."

Controlled or prescribed burns are necessary on military bombing ranges to keep the fuel levels in the soil at a minimum and to destroy invasive vegetation interfering with wildlife habitats.

"Removing excess brush opens the area for wildlife like the red-cockaded woodpecker and releases beneficial nutrients into the soil," Mr. Henderson said. "Prescribed burns also keep the land less susceptible to potential uncontrollable fires during munitions training. These burns decrease the amount of fuel contaminants in the soil and remove dead brush on the ground that can easily catch fire."



WT file photo

**(Above) Amy Midgett, firefighter and equipment operator for the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, uses a Terra Torch mounted on a truck to throw a stream of flaming liquid along the roadside to facilitate rapid ignition. (Below) Ms. Midgett uses a hand-held torch along the roadside to ignite and flare-up a bush and small group of trees.**

The DCBR is owned and operated by Seymour Johnson, but leases sections of the range to the Air National Guard and the Navy.

Interest in maintaining optimal conditions of the land extends beyond the military, to include the local Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, which must maintain a balanced ecosystem for wildlife.

"This joint effort is a brilliant use of resources," Mr. Henderson added. "The fish and wildlife refuge provides the equipment and manpower while we ensure the burn is conducted safely during optimal weather conditions."

In addition to safety being the number one concern for everyone, determining how and when to start a prescribed burn is essential for success. Environmental conditions such as relative humidity, air temper-

ature, fuel moisture content and wind direction are monitored daily by the DCBR to determine when the controlled burn can begin.

Past burning experiences at the DCBR were most effective using a helicopter, trucks and hand-held torches.

The process begins by burning the perimeter to create a safe burn line using a Terra Torch mounted on the back of a truck. The torch shoots jellied gas along the wood line to start the fire. Hand-held drip torches are used to light sidelines along roads to create fire protection areas. From the air, helicopters drop ping-pong size balls called aerial ignition devices within the brush areas. After the AIDs hit the ground, the plastic shell dissolves, combines with oxygen and ignites a flame.

"The Fall is perfect for a prescribed burn because the trees

have dropped fuel contaminated leaves on the ground keeping flames low and easy to control," Mr. Henderson said. "We want a 60-percent kill of vegetation to achieve ecosystem goals mutually beneficial to everyone."

During the burn, other organizations, such as the U.S. Forest Service and the Environmental Protection Agency, collect data from the smoke plumes for research purposes.

"This joint effort is a brilliant use of resources, manpower and research," Mr. Henderson said. "We all have the important task of ensuring flying operations continue and providing a safe haven for threatened species. It's mutually beneficial for military operations, the environment and wildlife; controlled burns must be conducted properly to ensure everyone's safety because fire has no borders."



WT file photo

## COACH: Retired Lt. Col. coaches E. Wayne Middle

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years at running back. My last year at Stephen F. Austin, I played corner-back."

After graduating Stephen F. Austin with a degree in health and physical education, Mr. Chatagnier traded in his football cleats and jersey for combat boots and a flight suit.

"I finished college in January 1969, and I left for officer training school on Easter Sunday," Mr. Chatagnier said. "In the three months between college and OTS, I did some substitute teaching to pass the time."

After finishing OTS June 30, 1969, Mr. Chatagnier went on to Chanute Air Force Base, Ill., for aircraft maintenance officer school. Upon graduation, he ventured off to his first duty assignment at Reese AFB, Texas, to work as a flightline maintenance officer.

When Mr. Chatagnier left Reese, he went on to navigation school. After assignments in England, Iceland, Las Vegas, Germany and the Pentagon, his career finally led him to Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C., in January 1988, where he became an F-4 navigator.

However, Mr. Chatagnier's time as a navigator here was short-lived. After a two-year stint as 4th Operations Group deputy commander, he went back to work in aircraft maintenance, this time as assistant deputy commander.

"This was the job I had when Desert Shield and Desert Storm began," Mr. Chatagnier said. "The Air Force reorganized while I was gone. Basically, I didn't have a job when I came back to the states."

That would not last for long. Mr. Chatagnier became the deputy support

group commander in July 1991 and spent the last two-and-a-half years of his Air Force career in that capacity.

After crossing out of the blue in July 1993, Mr. Chatagnier got his chance to do what he said he originally planned to do - become a football coach and health and physical education teacher.

Mr. Chatagnier started teaching at Eastern Wayne County Middle School in 1993 and still teaches there to this day. As for coaching, he spent his first year as an offensive coordinator for Goldsboro High School.

The following year, Mr. Chatagnier moved on to Eastern Wayne High School and coached the offense for five seasons. But coaching at the high school level was beginning to wear on Mr. Chatagnier.

"Once my children, their spouses and my five grandchildren moved a little

closer to us, I decided to coach where I was teaching. Coaching at the high school level takes a lot of time, especially on the weekends, and I wanted to be able to spend more time with my family."

The move paid dividends, when after two seasons as the offensive coordinator, he finally got his opportunity as head coach.

Mr. Chatagnier led the Warriors to a 21-3 record over the past three seasons. Three conference championships and a county championship in 2005 also highlight the list of accomplishments for Mr. Chatagnier's team.

"This season was the hallmark for our team," Mr. Chatagnier said. "Not only did we go undefeated, but no one scored a single touchdown on us. We only gave up 18 first downs all season long."

Mr. Chatagnier credits his Air Force

career for the success he's had in coaching and teaching.

"The things you learn in the Air Force correlate directly to things you learn in teaching school and coaching sports," Mr. Chatagnier said. "First of all, you have to be very organized. The leadership roles I've had within the Air Force have prepared me for teaching and coaching children. It's a challenge to teach them to do the right things in life when there's a lot of people and things out there trying to get them to do the wrong thing."

Mr. Chatagnier's players seem to respond to the values their coach attempts to instill in them.

"It's real good playing for Coach Chatagnier," said A.B. Scott, seventh grader and Warriors starting nose guard. "I would rather have him as a coach than anyone else."

## 4th MDG sets dates, locations for flu shots

- ♦ Nov. 23 - High risk individuals (includes the elderly, young children and people with health risks): Community center from 8-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m.
- ♦ Nov. 28 - 4th Civil Engineer Squadron: 8-11 a.m. at the fire station and 1-3 p.m. at the 4th CE building
- ♦ Nov. 29 - 4th Aerospace Ground Equipment from 8-11 a.m. in Bldg. 2115, 4th Operations Squadron from 1-3 p.m.
- ♦ Nov. 30 - 4th Component Maintenance Squadron from 8-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. in Bldg. 4312

## Holiday safety from the commander

The holiday season is upon us. It's a time of celebration with family and friends...but it's also a time for increased safety awareness. In the enthusiasm of having some time off and relaxing with friends and family, all of us need to focus on the fundamental elements of personal risk management and be good leaders and wingmen.

We all recognize the potential hazards associated with holiday cheer... don't drive under the influence and don't let one of your comrades or family members do it either. Winter travel can create serious hazards... we need to pay attention to fatigue, and inattentive driving when we're trying to squeeze out one more day on a trip and visit. We all need to pause, use common sense, and do the little things that are important: obey the traffic signs; wear seat belts; and check the weather and vehicle conditions. Most importantly, make appropriate travel plans...then have a backup... just as we do on the job. When we as leaders and wingman see that plans don't make sense, call "knock-it-off" and help establish an alternative plan. Involved leadership and wingmanship makes a difference. The goal is ZERO mishaps...let's finish 2005 on a great note and start 2006 refreshed and ready for the fight ahead. As we do, Valerie and I extend our warmest wishes for the holidays and for a peaceful, healthy, and happy new year to the entire ACC family here and deployed around the globe.

RONALD E. KEYS  
General, USAF  
Commander